

Igor Bondar

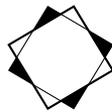
DOLPHINS 5 Wales



Igor Bondar

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A fairy tale



“Zolotoye sechenie“
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This time, our aquatic friends come to the aid
of the largest inhabitants of our planet — the whales.

Illustrated by Alyona Garbuz.

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The Football

On that morning, everyone in *The Globe* agency was playing football. The friends had been thinking for a long time on what to do in the office when there are no clients, until dolphin Karen suggested an interesting idea.

‘Binnie, do you remember you once watched football on the TV in a café?’ she asked her husband. ‘You liked it then.’

‘Yes, I remember, my darling,’ the dolphin smiled. ‘People were running on a green field with a round ball and everyone in the café was crying out cheerily.’

‘That’s right. What if we try organizing something like that here so that we don’t feel bored?’

‘Hmm, let me think about it,’ Bin said.

‘Friends, can you tell us what this football is?’ Geo and Stressy asked them simultaneously.

Turtle Medky also swam up closer with a curious look.

‘Well, football is a game where a round thing needs to be driven into the gates of another team. A door or something like that can be used as goal gates. We have many different things on the upper deck of our office,’ Karen explained. ‘Let’s swim and see what’s there.’

The friends swam out of the hold and started looking around with interest.

‘Look!’ Bin said. ‘This hole in the board could be used as a goal gate for one of the teams. And, there’s a similar hole on the other side of the ship.’

‘Good idea, Binnie,’ Karen nodded approvingly. ‘And, where will we find the ball? Of course, I could buy a normal ball on earth, but it will rise to the sea surface at once. Here, we need something round that won’t rise to the surface.’

Everyone thought for a while. Suddenly, Geo started up and, having given Medky a sweet look, prepared himself to open his mouth to talk.

‘Not my globe!’ the turtle said harshly, having guessed the thoughts of the dolphin.

The friends burst into laughter cheerfully and started thinking again.

Then, Stressy started talking.

‘You know, friends, generally our octopus Ponty can become quite round in shape!’

Everyone around there smiled strangely.

‘Well, maybe there’s something in that,’ Medky coughed and said thoughtfully a minute later. ‘And, the most important thing is that that means he’ll also take part in the football game.’

Bin and Karen burst out laughing.

‘That might work,’ Geo said. ‘But let’s swim to him first and ask him directly. If he refuses, we’ll have to think of something else, then.’

Everyone nodded in agreement and set off. Ten minutes later, they swam into the octopus's cave where he performed massages. Ponty sat in the corner twisting the Rubik's cube while waiting for any clients to come.

'Friends!' he exclaimed when he saw the dolphins and the turtle. 'I'm so happy to see you here! What brought you all here today?'

'My friend,' Medky started tactfully. 'To begin with, could you please curl into a perfect-shaped ball?'

'No problem,' Ponty replied without understanding why they asked that, and in an instant, he became very much like a ball. 'What do you need it for?'

'Umm. You know, friend, people have a game called football. So, we decided to organize something similar in our office as we wait for clients,' Medky said. 'And, we've swum up here to ask whether you want to take part in the game?'

Ponty looked at his friends with a smile.

'Of course! I love playing games. Just tell me what I'll need to do there?'

Friends hesitated for a second.

'Well, friend, you'll be playing the most important part in the game, you'll be the ball. And, we'll push you into one of the goal gates,' at last, Bin said honestly.

Ponty kept silent for a couple of minutes.

'You'll push? It isn't very painful, is it?' he asked after that.

‘Well, no, my friend. We’ll play you very gently,’ Geo tried to calm him and suddenly, joyfully added. ‘It’ll be more like a massage that you do to your clients.’

‘A massage? Hum, interesting... Then, perhaps, it’s worth trying,’ the octopus said, more cheerfully this time. ‘Maybe, I’ll actually like it.’

And that’s exactly how it happened. Since that day, the friends played football on the upper deck of their office quite often. The only downside to Ponty being the ‘ball’ was that he would always help the losing team by clinging to the goal post at times. However, the only football fan, manta Bolly, did not worry much about that, clapping her wings cheerfully if such happened.

There were only two teams in *The Globe*. Bin and Karen became a team while Geo and Stressy became the other team. Medky became an all-time and fair judge. Therefore, the *sly ball* would often fall under the judge’s criticism. On the other hand, Ponty’s big advantage was that after each score, he rolled himself out to the center of the field.



Gorgy

On that day, the friends were playing football again. The score was 7:9 in favor of Geo and Stressy when suddenly, a huge shadow fell on their sunken ship.

‘Where is the office of *The Globe* agency?’ the friends heard a loud bass from above and raised their heads.

A huge whale was hanging over them.

‘Hmm,’ Medky mumbled thoughtfully. ‘I guess, it’s better we’ll stay here to serve you. What can we do for you?’

Ponty immediately turned from a ball into an octopus, and with the dolphins looked at the enormous guest with interest.

‘My name is Gorgy,’ the whale growled. ‘Sharks at the Galápagos Islands told me that you can help even in a very difficult situation.’

‘It’s hard to tell for sure ahead of time. But, we’ve really had some success several times,’ Geo replied.

‘My situation is rather complicated,’ Gorgy sighed sadly. ‘I don’t even know where to start.’

‘Better start from the beginning, Gorgy. And, the more details you give, the better,’ Karen smiled at him. ‘Take your time.’

Gorgy nodded his huge head and began his story. But first, he laid down on the sand near the ship.

‘We, the whales,’ he began his story without hurrying, ‘are the biggest dwellers of the seas and the oceans. Needless to say, we

have no real enemies underwater. However, we have got a rather serious enemy who comes to us from dry land by ships.'

'A human?' Bolly the manta asked him.

'Yes,' the whale nodded sadly. 'I've been living for a long time already and, unfortunately, I had to say the last goodbye to many of my friends and relatives. That happened because of the people.'

'I've heard about it a little,' Karen joined the conversation. 'Several decades ago, people killed almost all the whales. But, after that, they agreed between themselves not to do that anymore, and the whales could be seen more often again. There is only one country left that keeps on hunting whales in spite of all things.'

Gorgy gave the young dolphinet a surprised look.

'Hmm... I have not thought that someone might know about whales more than I do,' he murmured. 'All that happened exactly as you said. A few decades ago, very, very few of us were left indeed. Then, it means people finally managed to agree not to kill us? That's interesting.'

'Yes. Therefore, only one country refused to do so.' Karen added. 'Now, it's basically them who hunt for whales. Usually here and there.'

The dolphinet pointed to a couple of places on the globe with her fin.

'Amazing!' Gorgy could only mutter. 'You know even this? It seems that I am really lucky to have swum to you.'



‘There’s nothing to be so happy about yet,’ Karen shook her head sadly. ‘This problem won’t be easy to solve. Many people have long been trying to protect the whales. They meddle a lot with the ships that hunt you down. However, it’s been like that for many years, but that country still continues to kill whales.’

‘There’s the thing,’ Gorgy shook his head with understanding. ‘We have wondered what those small boats that appeared between us and the big ships were. It turns out that they are our defenders among the people.’

‘Yes, there aren’t few of them. But still, they can’t solve this problem once and for all.’

‘What are we going to do, guys?’ the whale looked at *The Globe* team with a big hope in his eyes. ‘Maybe you can help us somehow?’

A total silence fell for several minutes.

‘It’s a very complicated issue, Gorgy,’ Karen finally said. ‘It will probably take a few days for us to tell you something at least.’

The whale nodded with understanding.

‘Swim back to us in three days, Gorgy,’ Bin addressed him. ‘Perhaps, we’ll have figure something out for you by then.’

The whale looked at everyone there, politely said good-bye and slowly swam away. However, in a few seconds he stopped and turned around.

‘Guys! What were you playing here when I came?’

‘An underwater football game,’ Ponty replied proudly.

‘That’s very interesting!’ the whale smiled for the first time. ‘I was watching you for some time before I spoke.’

Having said that, Gorgy waved goodbye with his fin to everyone and swam away. Then, the friends began discussing the new task.

* * *

‘It looks like we’ve not got a simple task this time,’ Bolly said looking at Karen.

‘Even more so,’ she nodded. ‘I’ve heard a lot about whaling ships when I was on an island. Those are not small pirate boats with a hawser. Those are big ships equipped with modern technologies which allow the hunters to see whales underwater and even lure them.’

‘Really?’ Geo wondered. ‘What are we going to do then?’

‘I think that first, we need to find out all the details on how they hunt whales today,’ Bin entered the conversation. ‘It’ll be difficult to provide any advice without this information.’

‘I’ve thought of it too, Binnie,’ Karen smiled. ‘I know an organization in the city that specializes in marine animal protection. I think I’ll pay them a visit tomorrow.’

‘It’s a good idea,’ Medky nodded, agreeing. ‘Try to find out more and then we’ll make our plans.’

* * *

The next morning, all the friends were seeing Karen off on her trip to the city near a deserted shore of a water channel.

‘My dear,’ Bolly said to her gently. ‘You go there and find out everything about those whale hunters. But, if you have a couple of spare minutes on your way back...’

‘I know, I know,’ Karen laughed, ‘then, I’ll definitely make my way back near the best pizza place.’

‘She’s such a smartie!’ the manta smiled. ‘For some reason, I have almost no worries about the whales.’

Everyone smiled cheerily.

‘You are exaggerating this much, Bolly,’ Karen said.

Then, she laid down in the shallow water near the shore. Having looked in the sky, she stood up on her feet at a beach.

‘How does she manage to do that so well?’ Stressy whispered to Geo’s ear. ‘Maybe one day, I’ll ask her to take me for a walk in the city? With Karen, I won’t get lost...’

The dolphin looked at her with a doubt.

‘Who mixed up our reef with the neighboring one last week?’

‘Well, I was busy thinking about our future babies!’ the young dolphinet replied sensitively.

‘I see,’ Geo nodded. ‘But, if you get lost, we won’t have any babies at all.’

Stressy frowned, thinking.

‘You are right! It never occurred to me. I need to think a little less about babies.’



Everyone shook with laughter.

Meanwhile, Karen checked for a credit card in the pocket of her shorts and, waving goodbye to her friends, headed towards the city.

* * *

There were only two employees in the office of the marine animal protectors: a young girl at the table near the entrance and a grey-haired man further away.

‘Hello! My name is Karen,’ the girl said, as she crossed the threshold. ‘I wonder if you could provide me with some information about modern whale hunters. I need it for a very important report.’

The young girl and the man stood up from their tables.

‘Hello, Karen! I’m Steve and this is Kelly,’ the grey-haired man stretched out his hand. ‘We’re always ready to help with the issues concerning whales’ protection. What are you interested in, specifically?’

Then, he offered the girl to sit in an armchair nearby. Meanwhile, Kelly was making a cup of coffee for the visitor.

‘I need to know all the technical details and methods that whale hunters use today,’ Karen told him.

‘Then you came to the right place,’ Steve nodded. ‘However, this conversation might take some time.’

‘Take your time,’ the girl smiled and sipped her coffee. ‘It’s more important that you don’t miss out anything.’

‘All right,’ the grey-haired man replied and began to tell.

While he was talking, Karen took some notes with a waterproof marker on plastic sheets.

* * *

‘Is there a beach party?’ the taxi driver smiled shrewdly, as he helped Karen to take a pyramid of pizza boxes out of the car, a couple of hours later.

‘Nope, the beach parties aren’t in fashion anymore,’ Karen shook her head cheerfully.

‘Really? What’s in fashion, then?’ the driver asked her with interest.

‘The most fashionable thing now is an underwater party,’ the girl replied, laughing and went towards a deserted shore, leaving the driver with his mouth open.

* * *

‘How did it go?’ the friends’ eyes were looking at Karen with interest from the water. ‘Did you manage to find out anything about the whale hunters?’

‘Oh, yes,’ Karen nodded. ‘I’ve found out a lot. I even have some thoughts on the matter.’

‘Perfect!’ Bolly smiled. ‘From such good news, my appetite always comes to normal. Ponty, why aren’t you feeding me pizza yet?’

Everyone laughed and the octopus crawled to the shore to take the first tasty round of pizza. At the same time, Karen was feeding the dolphins and the turtle.

An hour later, the well-fed friends gathered in the office for a meeting. Karen told them in detail everything she found. From time to time, she was looking at the plastic sheets which the octopus turned for her. When she finished, Geo started to talk first.

‘As far as I can see, those hunters have only one weak point. Their ship is very big and there is only one gun at its front.’

‘That’s right,’ Karen nodded. ‘I thought of that first as well. They always have to turn the ship’s head towards a whale.’

‘One more detail seems curious to me,’ Bin added. ‘The harpoon gun can hit the target accurately only at a distance of up to twenty-five or thirty meters. Not so much.’

Friends nodded in agreement.

‘In fact,’ Bolly joined the conversation, ‘I think that we should come up with a set of rules for the whales near those whaling ships.’

‘It’s a good idea,’ Karen agreed. ‘And I think that if we tell Gorgy about it, he’ll quickly share it with other whales.’

‘I can participate in this too,’ Bolly said. ‘I’ll pass this news to the whales with the help of my guests – the mantas.’

* * *

The next day, the whale Gorgy swam to their office again. As he greeted everyone warmly, he came to the point.

‘So, guys? Do you have any ideas on how to help us?’

‘We’ve got something, Gorgy,’ Bin replied for everyone. ‘We researched this problem well and have some ideas.’

‘Oh, really?’ the whale cheered up. ‘I would much like to hear them.’

‘You see,’ Geo interfered, ‘certainly, you won’t succeed in the struggle against the whale hunters. They are much stronger. However, you can survive if you follow some rules when around their ship. The hunters have some weak points.’

‘Really?’ Gorgy asked. ‘Which ones?’

‘Well, firstly, their main hunting weapon is a harpoon cannon which is located on the bow of the ship,’ Bin said. ‘That’s why if you stay by their side and even better at their rear, they won’t be able to do anything to you.’

‘You, the whales, are much more maneuverable than their large ships, so it won’t be very difficult for you,’ Karen smiled.

‘So interesting,’ Gorgy thought. ‘Is there anything else?’

‘Sure,’ Bin added, ‘their harpoons only shoot accurately at the distance of twenty-five or up to thirty meters. Consequently, the farther away you are from them, the much safer you will be.’

‘Got it,’ the whale nodded. ‘These are some useful pieces of advice indeed.’

‘So, if you surface behind their ship’s screw, they can do nothing to you,’ Karen said. ‘Besides, if you have an opportunity to hide behind an island or an iceberg – do it. The whale hunters don’t like swimming to unfamiliar places where they can damage their ship.’

‘Great, guys!’ Gorgy finally smiled. ‘These are some very useful pieces of advice for us. It’s worth trying them out.’

‘But how?’ Ponty asked him with curiosity.

‘That’s quite simple,’ Gorgy laughed, ‘I’ll swim up to the whale hunters myself and try it on the spot. How else?’

‘By yourself?’ the octopus slowly asked him again.

‘Well, yes,’ the whale nodded his head. ‘Before suggesting something to the others, I must be completely sure that it works. That’s why I must try it myself.’

‘I see, Gorgy,’ Bin nodded. ‘Maybe, you are right. Would you mind me joining you? Perhaps, I’ll be of use to you if there’s any danger.’

‘I wouldn’t mind,’ the whale smiled. ‘Thank you.’

‘Bin, do you want us to miss the main action again?’ the manta replied indignantly. ‘No way, I’ll swim with you, too!’

‘It seems like everyone will swim with you, Binnie,’ Karen smiled, looking around.

‘Especially since the whale hunters don’t care at all about octopuses ,’ Ponty added, smiling.

‘But there are two teams of dolphins who do care, because they want to play underwater football sometimes,’ Stressy smiled.

Friends laughed.

‘Thank you, guys! It will be much more fun this way,’ Gorgy said. ‘All in all, I’ll feel much safer with you.’

‘Good,’ Karen smiled. ‘If only the whale hunters knew that it’s the first time a whale is going to search for them! By the way, some whale hunters have recently been spotted in this place.’

The dolphinet swam up to the globe and showed a point on it with her fin.

‘That’s only three days’ journey from here,’ Bin said.

‘You know even this?’ Gorgy choked. ‘Wow! Would you please tell me how you know?’

The friends looked at each other and then gave Karen a questioning look. She sighed and lifted her fins.

‘Alright, Gorgy,’ she nodded. ‘You’ll be risking your life by trusting our advice. That’s why, perhaps, you have a right to know everything. But, let this story be a secret.’

‘Fine,’ the whale agreed.

‘And, one more thing,’ Bolly interfered, ‘it’s a very long story.’

‘Well, then, I might listen to it on our way to the whale hunters,’ Gorgy suggested.

‘Okay,’ Karen agreed. ‘So, friends, when are we setting off?’

‘The sooner, the better, I think,’ Medky said, ‘the hunters are not just enjoying the sea at the moment.’

Everyone there nodded in agreement.

‘Decided,’ Bin said, ‘we’ll swim tomorrow morning, then’.

* * *

On the early morning of the next day, Gorgy and the whole team of *The Globe* set off on their journey. Karen told her story to the whale as well as some details of their trip to Atlantis and the Galapagos islands, and this lasted until the afternoon. The whale stopped several times and groaned in surprise. He was especially surprised when Aya was mentioned and how he helped the friends.

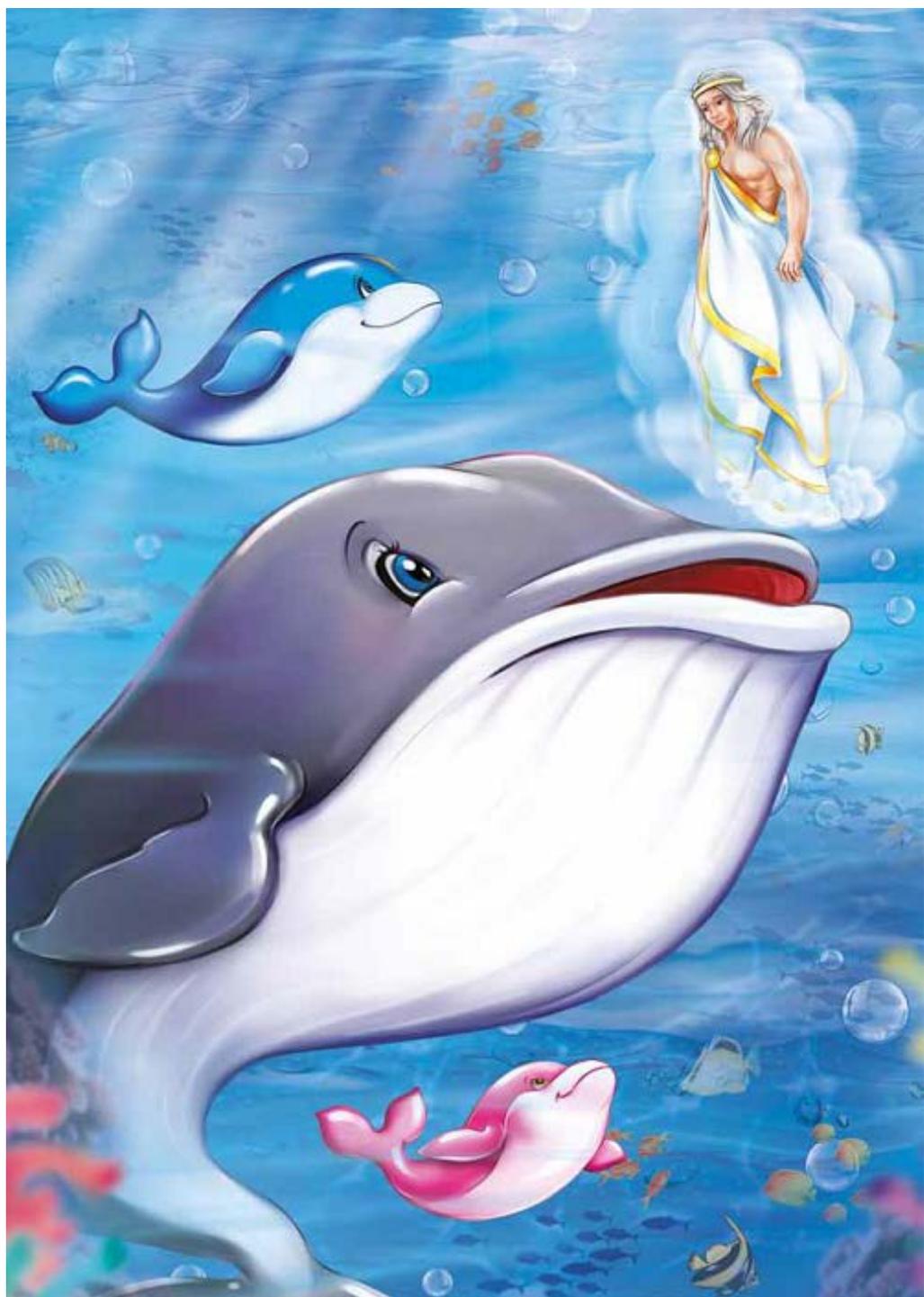
‘Will that Aya help me if something goes wrong?’ Gorgy addressed the friends with surprise.

At that instant, Bin glanced cheerily towards the open sea.

‘Aya... What smart thing should we reply to him?’ he asked with a smile.

A cloud-man with a happy expression on his face began to appear right between the eyes of Gorgy’s enormous head.

‘Well, Bin, I don’t even know. You might tell him something like this: ‘Aya is always ready to help those who swim to help others while risking their lives,’ the cloud-man said thoughtfully and started to disappear after that.



The friends shook with laughter and waved their fins to greet Aya. The whale stopped in surprised. After some time, the friends began to worry.

‘Gorgy, how’re you there?’ the octopus asked him and climbed to the whale’s head. ‘Is everything alright?’

‘Unbelievable...’ the whale found his tongue again. ‘What sort of things are going around here!’

Everyone there sighed with relief.

‘Frankly speaking, Karen,’ Gorgy spoke with greater confidence, ‘while you were telling me those stories, I had some doubts if some things actually happened.’

‘I’m not surprised,’ she burst into laughter.

‘Now, there is no doubt left,’ Gorgy smiled. ‘Moreover, I’m feeling much calmer now. Thank you a lot!’

‘You are welcome,’ Geo replied for everyone and looked around. ‘By the way, should we think of an overnight stop?’

‘Maybe we’ll have time to play football? I miss it already,’ Ponty said.

The dolphins burst into laughter and began searching for places on the seabed that looked like goal posts.

‘Who knew that my idea about the ball would work so fine...,’ Stressy thought in her mind, looking at a happy Ponty.

Kityaka-san

Kityaka-san, an old whale hunter, was standing near his harpoon cannon looking into the sea. The seawater had become colder in recent days and it meant that the whales would soon appear. One more piece of good news cheered him up: those intrusive whale defenders were not seen. For some reason, those dorks somehow can't believe that in his country can't live without whale meat.

‘A fountain on starboard!’ suddenly Kityaka heard a loud voice of the observer and took his binoculars.

There it was. The first fountain could be seen on the starboard side about a kilometer from the ship.

‘Turn right!’ Kityaka-san commanded and began unwrapping the harpoon with a smile.

He loved his work and the harpoon. Moreover, in his country being a whale hunter was considered a very prestigious profession. Ten minutes later, their first whale was right in front of the ship only a hundred meters away.

‘Slow ahead!’ the harpooner commanded. He has studied the whales' habits well in the course of many years. He could foresee much of their behavior.

The whale threw the final fountain and dived deep into the sea. Kityaka-san stood still at the gun, waiting for the whale to emerge right in front of the ship's bow in a few minutes. Suddenly, the harpooner's attention was drawn by four dolphins, a manta and a turtle that were swimming on the surface a little to the side.

‘What an unusual company!’ Kityaka’s thought flashed and then, he switched to the whale again. Now, he was looking at the sea through the scope of the harpoon gun.

‘A fountain behind the ship!’ he heard the spotter’s loud voice.

‘What the dickens?’ Kityaka wondered. ‘The whale should have emerged in front of us. Maybe that’s another whale?’

Nevertheless, nothing rose to the surface in front of the ship. Kityaka leaned off from the scope.

‘Turn 180 degrees!’ he commanded angrily.

The engines roared and the whaling ship started turning around slowly. Soon, the whales’ fountain was right in front of the ship again, about two hundred meters away.

‘Easy ahead!’ Kityaka shouted again and stuck to the harpoon.

The whale dived to the depth again. Time dragged on slowly in anticipation of its return.

‘Come on, come on, my dear, just come back,’ the whale hunter murmured.

‘A fountain behind the ship!’ Kityaka suddenly heard the observer’s words.

The whale hunter kicked his harpoon. However after, he took a deep breath, as his grandfather taught him a long time ago, breathed out slowly and commanded with a calm voice.

‘Turn 180 degrees!’



After that, the ship made eight more turns. In the meantime, Kityaka-san was kicking his harpoon several times, breathing deeply and even drank a whole bottle of Coca-Cola. The latter he had not done before. Finally, the harpooner sat down on a step near his gun, immersed in his thoughts, and started analyzing the situation more thoroughly.

‘Well-well, it seems that you’re a very clever whale,’ he thought, smiling slyly. ‘But Kityaka-san is no worse than you and he has a good plan. Now, you hold on, my friend.’

‘Listen to me attentively!’ he said, standing up. ‘This time, after the whale dives, we’ll immediately turn around 180 degrees. Got it?’

The coxswain and the crew nodded in response.

After that, the harpooner stood by the gun again. Immediately after the whale dived, the ship turned quickly.

‘Come on, clever boy, try fooling me this time,’ Kityaka whispered.

Seconds seemed to pass slowly in waiting.

‘A fountain behind the ship!’ a disgusting voice of the observer cried out again. This time he added: ‘Boss! I’m sick from these turns...’

Kityaka san kicked his gun so hard that he moaned in pain.

‘That’s it! Let’s head further south!’ he commanded and finally covered the gun.

After that, he treaded to his cabin to watch the *Tom and Jerry series*. His grandfather had taught him a long time ago what to do in case the whole day proved to be a bad luck.

* * *

‘Hurray! You’ve done it!’ the happy friends swam up to the whale, Gorgy.

He looked at them, stunned and smiling.

‘It seems I did it! Although several times I dreamed of becoming very small.’

They all burst into laughter.

‘Was it hard to swim away, hiding from them?’ Bin asked him.

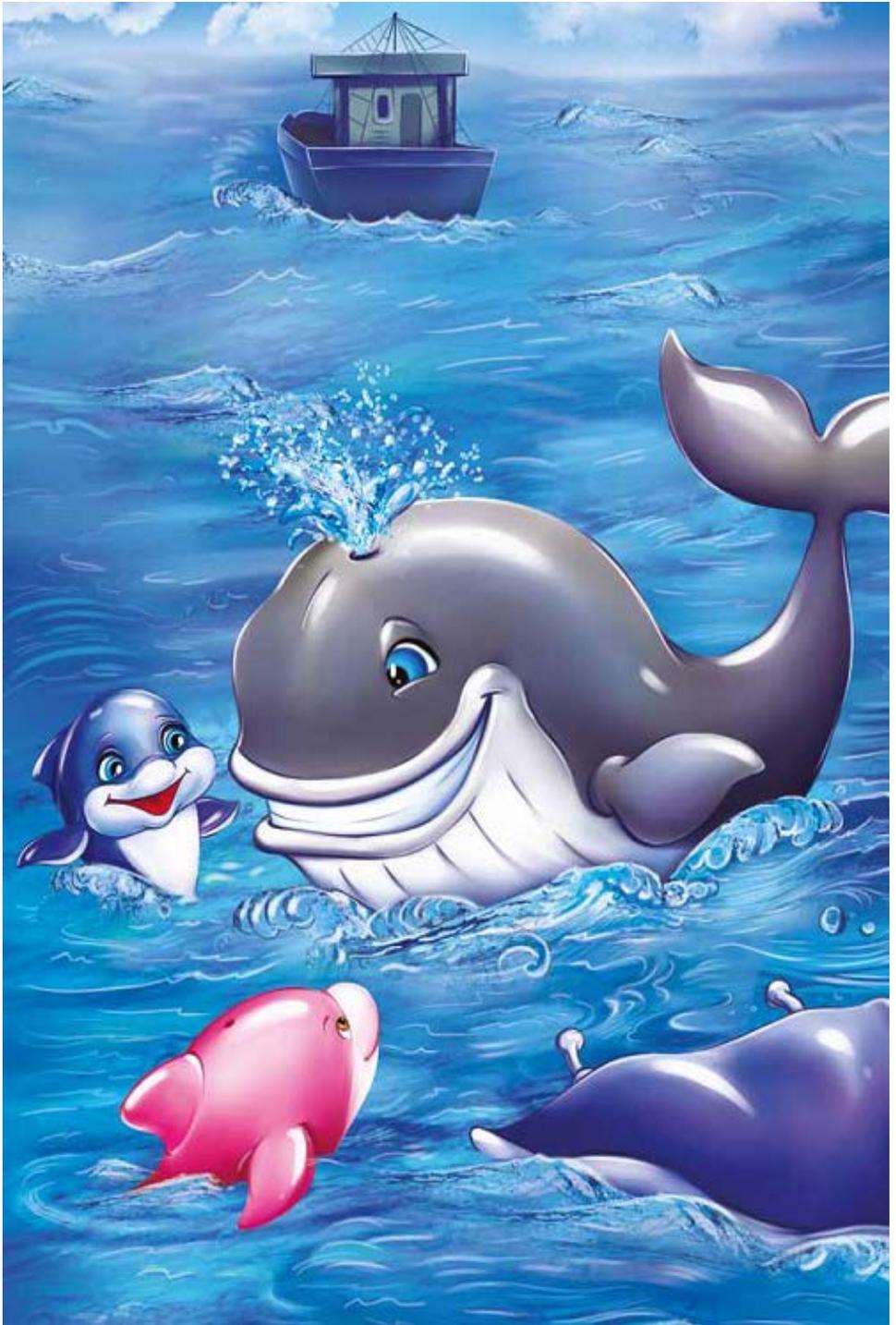
‘Well, no, frankly, not really. Their ship is rather slow at turns,’ Gorgy smiled too finally. ‘Moreover, I would have managed to swim back and forth twice, probably.’

‘Well done friend!’ Geo said and then asked. ‘What do we do next? Will you recommend this method to your whale-friends?’

‘Of course! Now, I’m completely sure it gives us a good chance to survive when meeting the whale hunters.’

‘Right. This time it was them who suffered most, it seems,’ Karen smiled. ‘I saw the harpooner kick the gun in anger and limped away then.’

‘This means our tactic was correct,’ Gorgy smiled. ‘So, now we should tell the other whales about this as soon as possible.’



‘That is the first thing we need to do now,’ Bolly agreed. ‘Me and my friends will spread the news through our channels too.’

Gorgy nodded his head gratefully.

‘Thank you!,’ he said.

After that, he looked warmly at his companion-friends. ‘Well, then, it’s time for us to say good-bye,’ he said with a little sadness in his voice. ‘I don’t even know how to thank you. You’ve done great work for us. It’s hard to imagine how many whales will now survive thanks to your advice.’

‘A lot of them, we hope,’ Karen smiled.

‘If you have time, come to see us,’ Bin suggested cordially to the whale. ‘You can tell us how things are going.’

‘I’ll come for sure!’ Gorgy promised and looked happily at the friends. ‘Besides, I have one more reason for this.’

Then, the smiling whale said goodbye to everyone while waving with his enormous fin and he swam back to his friends.

Epilogue

Bin and Karen won the match with a score of 7:2 despite Ponty trying hard to get a hold of goal posts to help Geo and Stressy! Though, today he could not do that well enough - Bin pushed him right through the middle of the goal posts.

Finally, after an accurate pass to Geo, Stressy managed to close the score gap. Bolly the manta, who would always support a losing team, happily clapped her fins.

‘The score is 7:3 for Bin and Karen!’ judge Medky announced the result in a very official manner.

Meanwhile the octopus got out of the goal to the centre of the field.

‘This is the football I told you a lot about, guys!’ the friends suddenly heard a familiar deep voice coming from above.

‘Gorgy!’ everyone shouted happily and raised their heads.

Their enormous friend was smiling at them. There were three more whales with him this time.

‘Hello, friends! That’s me,’ Gorgy roared, ‘I’m not alone this time. Let me introduce my friends to you: Amby, Squo and my wife Gundy. By the way, Amby has recently saved himself from the whale hunters thanks to your advice.’

An enormous whale who was near Gorgy waved his fin warmly.

‘So, you’ve managed to do it all well?’ Karen asked him.

‘Yes, guys,’ their friend replied. ‘Your advice has been proven many times and it always had a positive result. Now we’ve begun teaching it to all the whales, including children.’

‘Great!’ Bin said happily and looked at his enormous friend with curiosity. ‘Gorgy, what’s the other thing you came here for?’

‘Football,’ he replied, slightly embarrassed. ‘Last time, I liked it very much. So, I decided to teach whales to play it, that’s why there are four of us here today.’

Medky looked at his ship terrified.

‘Guys!’ he said tactfully. ‘Perhaps, you should start your training slightly away from this place? Our firm could lose its office during your first match.’

Everyone burst into loud laughter.

‘I’ve got one more suggestion,’ the octopus Ponty added, ‘of course, I’m ready to be your ball for some time. However, you’d better find a giant octopus for your game next time. I’ve heard they live at the bottom of the Mariana trench. In the event of an unfortunate collision between such players, I risk turning into a... small flat manta’

‘All right, friends! We completely agree with you. We’ll be very careful,’ Gorgy nodded and looked at his enormous companions with shining eyes. ‘So? Have all of you seen how to play? Shall we start?’

The whales nodded cheerfully.

‘Well, then, let’s swim slightly away from here and begin. I’ll play in pair with Gundy. Amby, you’ll be with Squo.’

‘Where do we find gates for you?’ Medky asked, suddenly.

Everyone there started thinking.



‘Let me make you something temporarily from the corals at the bottom,’ Ponty suggested. ‘We’ll figure something out later.’

‘Agreed,’ Gorgy nodded. ‘And tomorrow, I might call two more whales. We’ll use their open mouths instead of the gates.’

Ponty’s colour began to change slowly. At first, he became bright red, then bright blue and then bright green. Finally, he turned to his usual tint and addressed Gorgy with a soft voice.

‘Don’t worry, my dear friend,’ he said politely, ‘why should we bother two more whales? I’ll spend a little more time right now and make very fine gates for you so that they will last for a ve-e-ery long time...’

The whales nodded with their heads happily while their friends from *The Globe* were hardly keeping themselves from bursting into laughter.

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Wales

A fairy tale





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